



“Currents” May 2022

UGRA Summer Programs and Volunteer Opportunities

In the words of Alice Cooper, “school’s out for summer.” Temperatures are rising and people from all over Texas will be flocking to our beautiful Guadalupe River to keep cool. Who wouldn’t?! Locals use the river year-round for recreation, but vacationing families will soon be among them. This increase in use means it is even more important for us to be mindful of how our actions can impact water quality. We must work together to take care of the river because our community relies on it. UGRA has great summer programs and volunteer opportunities that help our community achieve a clean, healthy river.

Throughout the year, UGRA monitors the quality of our local waterways. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, we ramp up bacteria sampling with our yearly Summer Swimability Study. Additional bacteria monitoring in our local creeks, streams, and rivers helps to keep those enjoying the river safe. During the study, water samples are collected weekly at 21 sites throughout Kerr County. They are then brought back to the UGRA Environmental Laboratory to be tested for *E. coli* bacteria. Results are analyzed and compared to the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards for primary contact recreation. This year, we will kick off our Swimability Study on May 23rd and test results will be posted weekly on UGRA’s website (www.ugra.org).

Since 2004, UGRA has implemented our Volunteer Summer Study Program to supplement data collected during the Swimability Study. Members of our community volunteer to collect water samples at locations of their choosing. This program has provided a great service to our community by encouraging local citizens to play an active role in monitoring the health of the river. In 2021, we were assisted by 34 volunteers who collected 452 samples at 44 locations throughout Kerr County. Come join this year’s effort to monitor the health of the Guadalupe River!

Every summer, UGRA hosts the River Clean Up to remove trash from the Guadalupe River watershed. It serves as an important reminder that keeping the river clean is a shared, year-round responsibility. The 19th Annual River Clean Up will take place on July 23rd at Flat Rock Park in Kerrville from 8AM – noon. We are going back to the in-person event so many have missed since 2020. Participants will work throughout Kerr County to remove trash from swimming holes, water crossings, drainage ditches, creek beds, and roadways. Upon returning to the park with their collected trash, volunteers can enjoy the ecological fair, refreshments, and a prize drawing. There will also be awards for the crazy things people find in the river! Last year’s Clean Up was a huge success despite the on-your-own format. We couldn’t have done it without our amazing sponsors and the 489 volunteers who picked up over 7,000 pounds of trash. If you’re interested in taking part this year, register today because the first 300 registered will receive a free 2022 River Clean Up t-shirt designed by a local student artist!

We at UGRA are excited to kick off this summer’s programs, but they won’t be successful without your help! Please contact me if you would like to volunteer or if you need more information. We can’t wait to see everyone!

Let’s Keep Our River Clean

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